

Ike Denies Nixon Role In Making 'Decisions'

By Edward T. Follard
Staff Reporter

President Eisenhower said yesterday that Vice President Richard M. Nixon has never participated in White House "decisions."

"No one participates in the decisions," the Chief Executive said at a news conference, in reply to a reporter's question. "I don't see why people can't understand this. No one can make a decision except me— if it is in the national executive area."

President Eisenhower told reporters yesterday that when he was an Army commander he used staffs, but it was he himself and not staff members who made the decisions.

He said that in the case of the Presidency, decision making had to be "in the mind and heart of one man," although, like all commanders and leaders he had known, he needed and sought consultations with his principal subordinates. And Nixon, he said, was "one of the very top" advisers.

"We understand that the power of decision is yours, Mr. President," a reporter said. "I just wondered if you could give us an example of a major

idea of his (Nixon's) that you had adopted . . ."

"If you give me a week, I might think of one," President Eisenhower said. "I don't remember."

Yesterday's presidential news conference, like the two that preceded it, was given over largely to politics. This bore out forecasts that the Chief Executive plans to strike

An interpretation of Vice President Nixon's role in White House decisions.

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Text of President's news Conference.

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as many blows as possible for the Nixon-Lodge ticket in his weekly meetings with the reporters.

He took two cracks this time at Sen. John F. Kennedy, the Democratic nominee for President. At the outset, he was asked about a remark Kennedy made after his medical aid plan had been defeated by the Senate—that if there was to be legislation on this "we are going to have to have an Administration that will pro-

vide leadership and a Congress that will act."

President Eisenhower observed that the Democrats had a 2-to-1 majority in Congress.

"I don't know why the complaints," he said. "They have got the majority—such great majorities. They can do anything they want to, if they get together."

Later on he had something to say about Kennedy's week-end charge that the Eisenhower Administration—including, notably, Nixon and Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson—had brought "disaster" to America's farmers.

The President said this was "a distortion that is used for political purposes, and nothing else."

Heaps Praise on Benson

He again heaped praise on Benson, saying he had never known a man "who was more honest, more dedicated, and more informed in his particular work."

"And I don't believe," he said, "that any of us should be so free as to crucify Secretary Benson. I think he has done a wonderful service."

Asked what he thought would be the major issues of the 1960 campaign, the President listed "the conduct of foreign affairs" and, on the domestic front, the farm problem and fiscal responsibility.

He said he had hoped that foreign policy could be handled in a bipartisan way, and that he thought it was "a little bit too bad" that it was going to be debated in the campaign.

The President was asked what he thought about the issue of "standing up to Khrushchev."

President's Reply

His reply:

"It never even occurred to me to make that as one of the basic issues—what to do with Mr. Khrushchev. I assumed that anyone who has got strong convictions as to the line he should take in negotiations to protect and advance the interests of his own country would push them forthrightly and courageously, and the point of mannerisms would not be particularly important."

The reporter who asked the question evidently had in mind the boast of Republican campaigners that Vice President Nixon had shown that he could "stand up to Khrushchev."

A newsman told the President that anti-Catholic propaganda had markedly increased in this campaign, and that his friend Evangelist Billy Graham had said the religious issue was a legitimate one and would be a "decisive" factor in the election.

General Eisenhower said he didn't know about Billy Graham's statement. He then went on to say, as he had before, that religion should not be an issue. But he was not so naive, he said, as to think that religion would not be an issue—at least in some areas.

"But I certainly never encouraged it," he said. "And I don't think I would ever admit that it is really a legitimate issue."